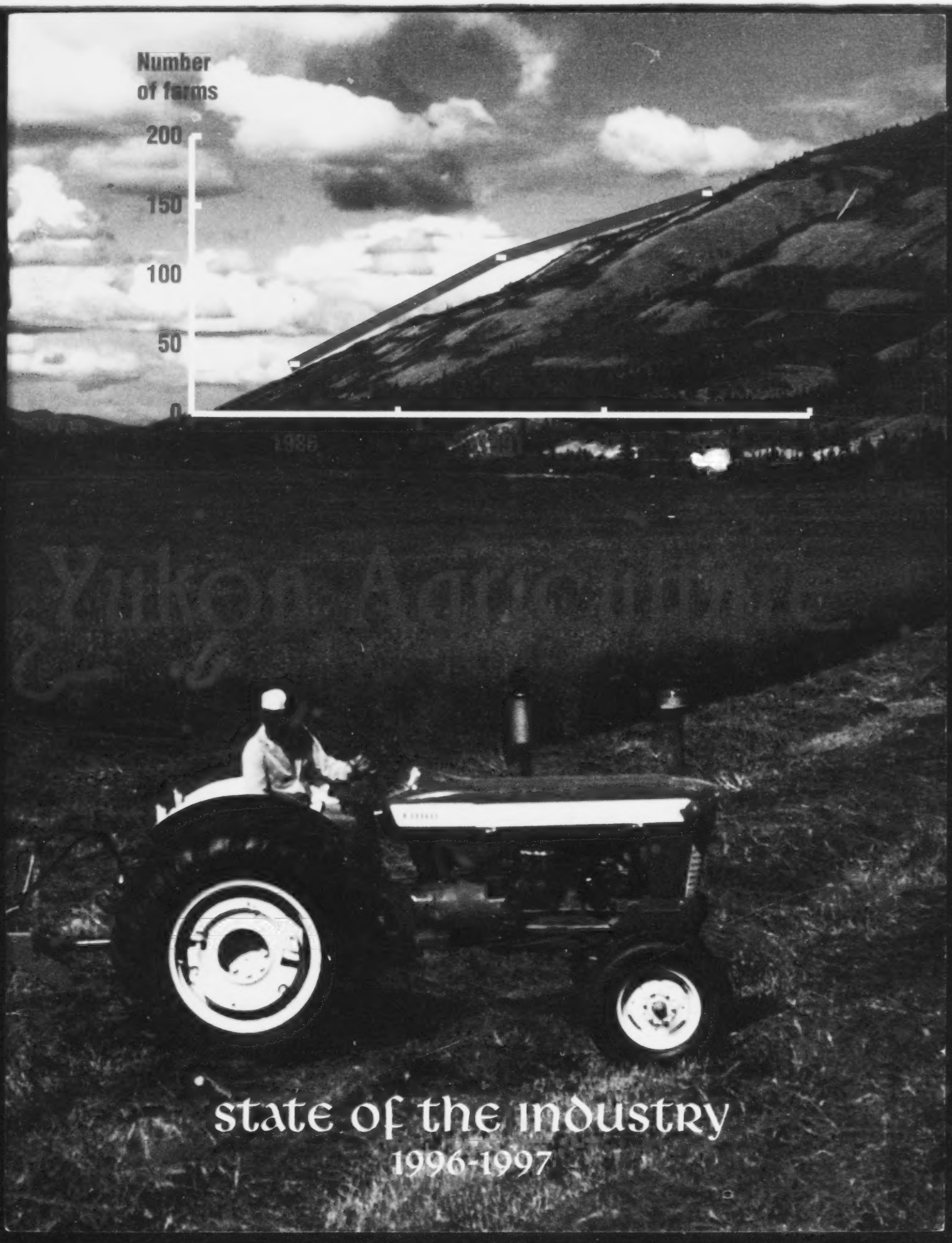


state of the industry

1996-1997

104-03947/

YUKON AGRICULTURE
STATE OF THE INDUSTRY, 1996-1997

Department of Renewable Resources, Government of the Yukon

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada — Research Branch

June 1998

Prepared by:
S.E.R. Smyth, Department of Renewable Resources, Government of the Yukon
D.B. Beckman, Department of Renewable Resources, Government of the Yukon
A.R. Hill, Department of Renewable Resources, Government of the Yukon
C.A.S. Smith, Yukon Land Resources Unit, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Report No. TR-98-05

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors acknowledge the contributors who provided information about their programs and activities:

Tracey Bowers: 4-H Yukon

Shirley Ford: Yukon Game Growers Association

Dorine Girouard: Yukon Agricultural Association

Art Hutchison: Agriculture Branch, Department of Renewable Resources, Government of the Yukon

David Murray: Agriculture Branch, Department of Renewable Resources, Government of the Yukon

Edward Lee: Agriculture Branch, Department of Renewable Resources, Government of the Yukon

Mike Southwood: Market and Industry Service Branch, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Edmonton

Ron Hoar: Farm Credit Corporation, Edmonton

Cover photos supplied by Photography Unit, Public Communications Services Branch, Government of the Yukon

For additional copies of this report please contact:
Agriculture Branch
Department of Renewable Resources
Government of the Yukon
Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6
phone (867) 667-5838

internet: http://www.renres.gov.yk.ca

ISBN 1-55018-837-2

Yukon
Office of the Minister
Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

I am pleased to present the Yukon Agriculture State of the Industry Report for 1996-97, which also includes information on the past ten years of the industry's development in the Yukon.

The report highlights the significant growth in the number of farms, farm production and revenues, and capital investment. All demonstrate the increased viability of the industry and the growing confidence of Yukon people in this important sector of our economy.

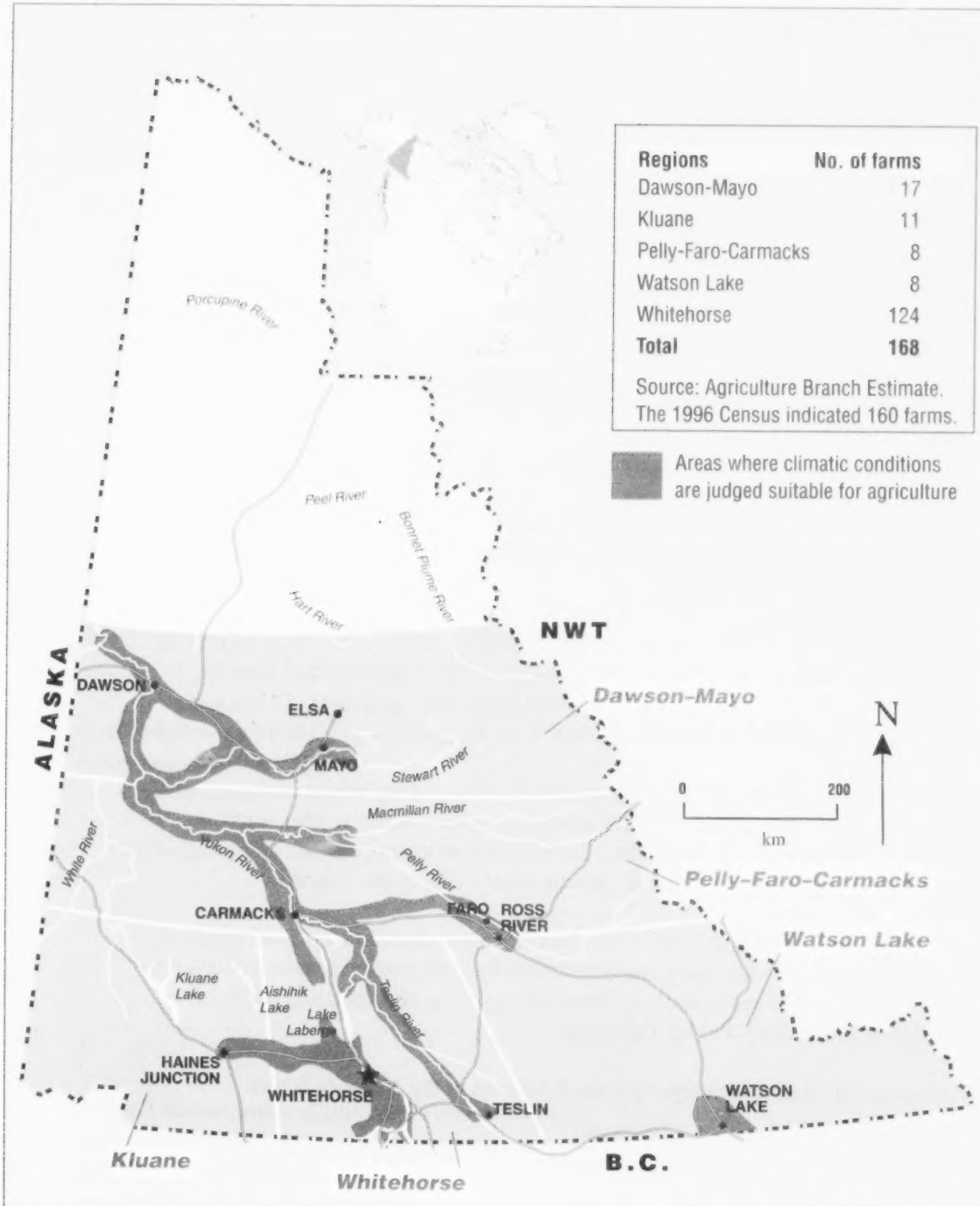
The number of Yukon farms rose from 34 in 1986 to 160 in 1996, while the value of production went from $500,000 to $3.5 million. By 1996 there had been an estimated $44.8 million invested in land, buildings, and equipment. This is a nine-time increase over the 1986 estimates.

Significant new industry initiatives for 1996-97 included legislation designed to protect the health and welfare of farm animals, a joint venture to launch an abattoir at Partridge Creek Farm, the Master Gardener course and the launching of the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund in the Yukon.

The two-phased Agriculture Policy evaluation, commenced in 1996, will continue in 1998, and will provide this government with the information required to ensure that the Policy continues to evolve to meet the growing and changing needs of the agricultural community and all Yukoners.

I commend this report to everyone with an interest in the Yukon's future.

Hon. Eric Fairclough
Minister



Location of Yukon agricultural areas.

Contents

INTRODUCTION 1

THE AGRICULTURAL LAND BASE
- A brief description of Yukon geography, climate and soil 2
- Yukon agricultural areas 3
- Obtaining Crown land for agricultural use 3
- Planned agricultural subdivisions 5
- Obtaining grazing agreements 5

PRODUCTION
- Overview 6
- The 1996 census 6
- Growing season conditions – 1996 and 1997 8
  - 1996 weather summary 8
  - 1997 weather summary 8
- Production sectors 9
  - Livestock 9
  - Poultry 11
  - Field crops 12
  - Greenhousing 12
  - Vegetables and berries 13
  - Native morel mushroom harvest 14
  - Honey production 14

YUKON GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS
- Department of Renewable Resources 15
  - Yukon Agriculture Branch 15
  - Demonstration plots 16
  - Extension services 17
- Policy initiatives 18
  - Agriculture policy evaluation 18
  - Animal health legislation 18
  - Animal Protection Act amendments 19
- Department of Community and Transportation Services 19
  - Interim Reciprocal Agreement on Farm Vehicles 19

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT
- Abattoir project 20
- Egg grading station 20
- Veterinarian services 20
- Farm capital 21

JOINT FEDERAL-YUKON PROGRAMS
- Economic Development Agreement 22
- Green Plan 22
- Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund 23
- Agriculture Planning and Advisory Committee 23

continued

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada 24
Research Branch 24
Market and Industry Services Branch 24
Policy Branch 25
Farm Credit Corporation 26

INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS
Yukon Agricultural Association 27
Game Growers Association 27
Yukon 4-H Program 28

MARKETING AND PUBLIC AWARENESS
Whitehorse Farmers' Market 29
Klondyke Harvest Fair 29
Media coverage 29
School presentations 29

APPENDIX 30

FIGURES
Figure 1: Number of Yukon farms (inner numbers) by size in hectares (outer numbers) (1996 Census). 1
Figure 2: Growth in the number of farms in the Yukon, 1986 to 1996. 4
Figure 3: Growth in the value of agricultural sales (1996 Census). 6

TABLES
Table 1: Figures relating to Yukon farm production (1996 Census). 7
Table 2: Frost-free period by year (0°C) at the Takhini Forestry Farm demonstration site. 8
Table 3: Growth of domestic stock based on the last three Census reports. 9
Table 4: Growth in greenhousing sector (1996 Census). 13
Table 5: Performance of berry and vegetable sectors (1996 Census). 13
Table 6: Summary of contacts by the Yukon Agriculture Branch with the public, 1994-1997. 18
Table 7: Growth in value of Yukon agricultural infrastructure ($millions) (1996 Census). 21
Table 8: Summary of program expenditures (in dollars) of the Canada/Yukon Agri-Food Green Plan. 23

INTRODUCTION

This report provides a status report on agricultural programs, services, and policies administered by the Yukon and federal governments, as well as a summary of initiatives taken by the private and non-government sectors. The target readership includes individual farmers, non-government organizations like the Yukon Agricultural Association (YAA), agricultural land applicants, other government departments, and interested public.

This report summarizes the agriculture sector's activities and developments during the 1996 and 1997 calendar years and reviews the industry's growth from 1986 to 1997.

The 1996-1997 highlights include:

- signing of a contract with Partridge Creek Farm to establish the Yukon's first modern abattoir;
- signing of the Canada-Yukon Agriculture Association Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund Agreement transferring $250,000 to YAA for Yukon projects;
- completion of the first Yukon agricultural land lottery in a planned agricultural subdivision on the Takhini Hotsprings Road;
- approval of a new *Animal Health Act* and amendments to the *Animal Protection Act* by the Yukon Legislative Assembly;
- completion of the 1996 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture showing strong growth in the Yukon's agriculture industry;
- initiation of the master gardener program, graduating 25 student volunteers who will assist people around the Yukon with their gardening problems;
- establishment of two new game farms; and
- expansion of the agricultural land base with the issuance of 27 new agricultural titles totalling 1,143 hectares.

The 1996 federal farm Census indicated the Yukon farm sector is healthy and growing and now supports 160 farms with an average size of 55 hectares. Approximately 60 percent of the estimated 9,890 hectares devoted to farmland are in production or under development (Figure 1.)

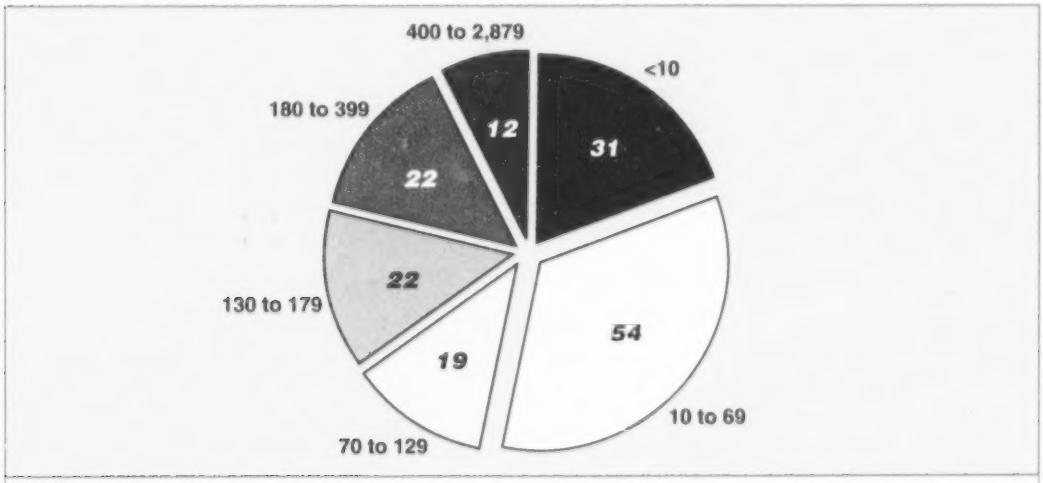


Figure 1: *Number of Yukon farms (inner numbers) by size in hectares (outer numbers) (1996 Census).*

THE AGRICULTURAL LAND BASE

A brief description of Yukon geography, climate and soil

Less than two percent of the Yukon's 483,450 square kilometres is suitable for agricultural development because of limitations of geography, climate and soils.

The Yukon is part of the Canadian cordilleran region that is characterized by mountainous terrain and the presence of glaciers and icefields in some areas. Soil-based agriculture is limited to major river valleys including those of the Yukon, Takhini, Pelly, Stewart and Liard. For the most part, agricultural activity is located on river sediments. In the Takhini and Dezadeash valleys, typical agricultural soils are formed on silts and clays deposited in glacial Lake Champagne.

The Yukon has a sub-arctic continental climate with temperatures reaching as high as 30°C in the summer and as low as minus 50°C in the winter. The average frost-free period ranges from 93 days in the Watson Lake area to 21 days at Haines Junction. As well as varying greatly geographically, frost-free periods vary substantially from year to year, at any location. Long hours of daylight during the summer promote rapid growth which compensates to some extent for the cooler summer temperatures experienced north of 60 degrees latitude.

Average annual precipitation ranges from about 20 centimetres west of Whitehorse to more than 40 centimetres in Watson Lake. The southwest Yukon, where most agricultural production occurs, lies within the rain shadow created by the St. Elias and Coastal mountains. Southwest Yukon is subject to droughts between April and July — a particular problem for crop germination.

Yukon soils are generally deficient in nitrogen and phosphorous. Potassium and sulphur abundance is often dependent on local geology and is difficult to predict. Since 1984 more than half of the soils tested by the Yukon Agriculture Branch have been deficient in potassium. The most common micro-nutrient deficiencies are boron and magnesium. Soils throughout the

A farming area in the Yukon River valley near Dawson City.

Yukon are low in organic matter, and salinity has been identified as a problem in localized areas. Permafrost is found throughout the Yukon, varying from sporadic discontinuous in southern agricultural areas and increasing to extensive discontinuous at the northern extreme of agricultural activity in the Yukon.

Yukon agricultural areas

The total amount of land disposed of through the Yukon agricultural land program is approximately 11,000 hectares. This land is utilized in the following ways: approximately 40 percent is in crops; 20 percent is under development; 20 percent is pasture; and the remaining percentage is undeveloped woodland. All of the land released to date represents less than one-half of one percent of the land base of the Yukon. (Note: These figures may differ from Census figures as they are compiled from Yukon government data sources.)

Most of the land used for agricultural purposes in the Yukon is located near the major communities. Seventy percent of the Yukon's farms are located within 100 kilometres of Whitehorse. The Takhini Valley agricultural area west of Whitehorse is the largest agricultural area in the Yukon. Significant agricultural areas are also found near Dawson City, Watson Lake and Mayo. (Yukon agricultural areas are illustrated on the map opposite the Contents page.)

Obtaining Crown land for agricultural use

The basis for obtaining Crown land for agricultural use is set out in the document *Agriculture for the 90s: A Yukon Policy*. The policy is currently under review and changes to the policy and delivery of the program are anticipated.

The Yukon is one of the few places left in Canada where Crown land can be obtained for agricultural purposes. To qualify for Crown land, an applicant must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada, at least 19 years of age, and have lived in the Yukon for at least one year.

The application process for acquiring Crown land for agricultural purposes takes approximately 12 to 24 months, and there are no guarantees that an application will be successful. The process begins with an application to the Yukon Department of Renewable Resources, Agriculture Branch. The application must describe the intended uses of the land and the applicant must certify that an acceptable farm development plan will be submitted within 30 to 60 days. Applicants must also declare that they will retain their Yukon residency during the life of any agricultural land agreement that may result.

Preliminary reviews of the application are conducted by the Agriculture Branch of the Department of Renewable Resources, the Lands Branch of the Department of Community and Transportation Services, and other government review agencies. Conflicts with land use regulations, other land interests and applications, or known First Nations land claims will be identified. The Agriculture Branch provides an evaluation of site suitability and arability.

The Agriculture Branch also assists the applicant in conducting an agricultural management review of the soils, topography, water, access, location, and other concerns. At the same time, other branches of the Department of Renewable Resources examine potential conflicts with fisheries, habitat, wildlife, and environmental and recreational values. Once these reviews have been completed, recommendations from the Department are prepared for consideration by the Department's Agricultural Land Application Review Committee (ALARC).

If the application receives a favourable review from ALARC it is forwarded to the Land Application Review Committee (LARC) and the First Nation which holds traditional territory in the area under application. Applications are also advertised in local newspapers so that members of the public are aware of the applications and may make comment. Following consultation with the First Nation and the public, an agreement for sale may be prepared setting out the terms and conditions which must be met in order for the applicant to obtain title to the land.

If the application is on federal Crown land (rather than Commissioner's land) the application must be approved by the Federal-Territorial Land Advisory Committee (FTLAC). Finally, an Order-in-Council must be approved by the federal Cabinet, transferring the land to the Commissioner for subsequent disposition to the applicant.

The land is released to the applicant under an Agreement for Sale with an attached value. With this figure in mind, the applicant is required to meet all the conditions of the Agreement for Sale, including development of the property. Under the provisions of the Yukon Agriculture Policy, for every two dollars of approved development work completed by the applicant, one dollar may be forgiven.

The total figure for the minimum work to be completed is calculated as being twice the difference between the market value of the land and the Yukon government's estimated development cost. If the applicant has met all the obligations of the Agreement for Sale at the end of five years, the Agreement can be considered completed and title can be issued.

There were 43 agricultural land applications submitted in 1996. Eighteen of these applications were rejected by the Yukon government. Twenty-one Agreements for Sale, totalling 787.91 hectares, were issued, and 13 agricultural titles, totalling 605.52 hectares, were issued. The first public agricultural land lottery for seven agricultural lots was conducted in November, 1996. There were 92 applications received for these lots.

There were 29 applications received in 1997, six of which were rejected by the Yukon government. Thirteen Agreements for Sale, totalling 193.96 hectares, were issued in 1997, while 14 titles, totalling 538.07 hectares, were issued.

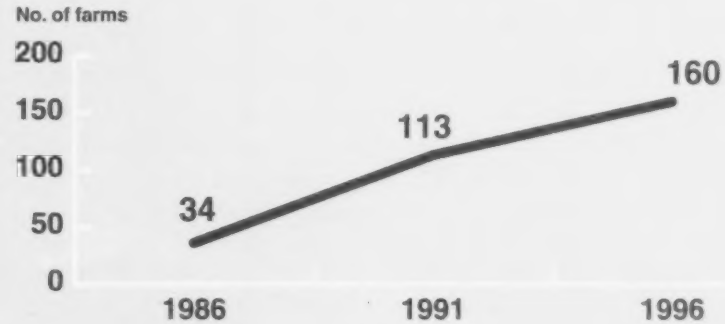


Figure 2: *Growth in the number of farms in the Yukon, 1986 to 1996.*

There are currently 42 agricultural land applications under active consideration, a further 23 on hold, and 36 are awaiting federal Orders-in-Council transferring them to the Yukon government, for a total of 101 applications in process. Most applications that are on hold require prior commitments to be completed, or are delayed due to land claims, land planning processes, or policy constraints.

Planned agricultural subdivisions

A new form of agricultural land disposition was launched in 1996 involving the release of agricultural land in a planned agricultural area on the Takhini Hotsprings Road near Whitehorse. The land was first identified as being free of other land interests and suitable for agricultural production. It was surveyed into seven parcels of approximately 7.1 hectares each, and offered for sale through public lottery.

Ninety-two bids were received, and 14 drawn. The first seven received the opportunity to accept the parcels they were drawn for, and seven additional bids were accepted to ensure that alternates were available in the event any of the first bidders drawn chose not to proceed. All seven parcels had gone to Agreement for Sale by the end of 1997.

Obtaining grazing agreements

Applications for grazing agreements are also submitted to the Agriculture Branch. The process for reviewing grazing applications is similar to that for agricultural land applications: potential conflicts with wildlife, existing land and resource uses, other land applications, and aboriginal claims must first be researched.

Grazing applications are reviewed and screened initially by Agriculture Branch personnel. Applications then go through reviews by two or three land review and advisory committees (ALARC, LARC, and FTLAC), depending on whether the application is located on federal or Commissioner's land. The Agriculture Branch also develops the Grazing Management Plan for the application area, estimates grazing capacities and stocking rates, and performs the related field work and inspections. If sufficient natural graze is found in the application area, and if no major conflicts are identified through the review process, a grazing lease agreement with tenure can be issued.

In some circumstances grazing lease holders may apply to the Branch to improve their lease holdings by increasing productivity through some form of range improvement. Lease holders could, for example, request that they be allowed to remove brush or apply various types of fertilizers.

In 1996, five grazing applications were received by the Agriculture Branch. One of these was rejected. In 1997, three applications were received. One application was deferred due to a land planning issue.

At the end of 1997, there were 24 applications under consideration. Six were under active consideration and two were on hold pending resolution of outstanding issues. Sixteen applications had been referred to the federal government with a request to transfer the land to the Yukon government by Order-in-Council. There were approximately 30 grazing agreements totalling about 8,500 hectares being administered by the Yukon government at the end of 1997.

PRODUCTION

Overview

Overall production of agricultural products is on the increase in the Yukon. This is evidenced by the figures that have been compiled in the Statistics Canada Agriculture Census reports of 1986, 1991 and 1996. The results of the 1996 Census indicated that the number of farms, total production, value of production and capital investment between 1986 and 1996 increased in the range of from five to nine times.

The number of farms in the Yukon increased from 34 in 1986 to 160 in 1996 (Figure 2). Value of production climbed from approximately $500,000 to $3.5 million in the same ten-year period (Figure 3). There was an estimated $44.8 million invested in land, buildings and equipment in 1996, a nine-time increase over the Census figure for 1986.

The amount of land in production also continued to expand each year, with 1,143 hectares of new agricultural land titled in 1996 and 1997. Based on policy criteria and development requirements, this resulted in just over 600 hectares of new cultivated land coming into the agricultural land base. This has also resulted in a continued increase in the amount of agricultural equipment being located in the Yukon.

According to the 1996 Census there are now 166 tractors, 33 mower conditioners, nine combines, 42 balers, and eight forage harvesters in the Yukon. Most of this equipment has been purchased from northern British Columbia or Alberta. Several private sector businesses have also been created to service, repair and transport farm equipment. It is also possible to contract the services of a custom machine operator and the services of a contractor to develop, prepare, seed, and work farmland. In 1996, the total value of custom and contract services, and machinery rental, was $90,700.

The 1996 census

The 1996 Statistics Canada Census of Yukon Farms provided the figures relating to Yukon farm production (Table 1).

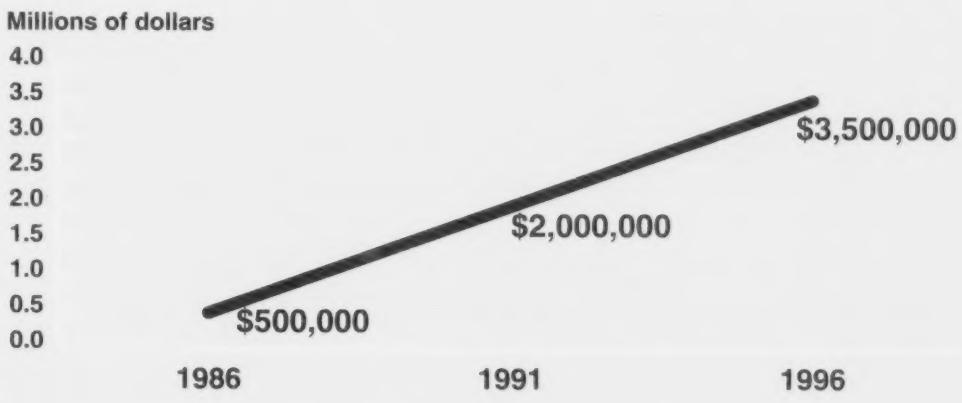


Figure 3: *Growth in the value of agricultural sales (1996 Census).*

CROP/LIVESTOCK	QUANTITY	
I. Field crops		
Total area of field crops	5,554	acres
oats	1,320	acres
barley	88	acres
fall rye	155	acres
alfalfa and alfalfa mixtures	668	acres
all other tame hay	3,236	acres
potatoes	41	acres
berries for sale	4.4	acres
vegetables for sale	29.9	acres
nursery products and sod	40	acres
II. Greenhouse production		
no. of farms reporting (greenhousing)	31	
total greenhouse area	83,520	square feet
flowers	38,363	square feet
vegetables	42,869	square feet
other greenhouse products	1,778	square feet
III. Fertilizer, irrigation, herbicides		
farms using commercial fertilizer	3,072	acres
farms using irrigation	980	acres
farms using herbicides	87	acres
IV. Poultry		
total hens and chickens	6,806	
broilers	1,334	
laying hens and chickens	4,766	
pullets and chicks	706	
turkeys	809	
V. Livestock		
total cattle and calves	278	
pigs	264	
sheep	136	
horses (on farms)	995	
deer and elk	108	
goats	24	
VI. Bees		
colonies of bees	30	
VII. Value of farming		
total value farm machinery and equipment	$5,474,780	
total gross farm receipts	$3,536,098	
total farm expenses	$3,352,221	
total farm capital	$44,852,012	
total market value of land and buildings	$33,593,201	

Table 1: *Figures relating to Yukon farm production (1996 Census).*

Growing season conditions — 1996 and 1997

The 1997 growing season was generally warmer than the 1996 season and had above normal precipitation in most areas of the Yukon.

Year	Last frost	First frost	Frost-free days*
1988	June 27	July 21	26
1989	June 21	August 10	50
1990	June 20	July 14	24
1991	June 17	August 5	49
1992	June 25	August 20	55
1993	June 19	August 19	61
1994	---	---	---
1995	June 1	July 15	44
1996	July 10	August 5	25
1997	June 15	August 15	61

*Whitehorse airport records a 30-year mean frost-free period of 87 days. This is substantially longer than that recorded at the Takhini Forestry Farm. The airport site regularly receives winds which tend to keep temperatures above freezing. The forested nature of the Takhini Valley site reduces air movement and makes frost more common.

Table 2: *Frost-free period by year (0°C) at the Takhini Forestry Farm demonstration site.*

1996 weather summary

Early spring temperatures throughout the Yukon were generally below normal while precipitation was mainly above normal. June was cool and dry in the central and southeast regions, and near normal but dry in the southwest. Below normal precipitation and late spring frosts resulted in poor conditions for germination and early crop growth. Irrigation in the spring and early summer was critical for the growth of cold hardy vegetables.

The summer months were generally cool across the Yukon with only a few stations recording extreme maximum temperatures above 30 degrees. July temperatures were generally near normal and August temperatures were below normal. Precipitation in both of these months was predominantly above normal, creating problems for fall harvests. The frost-free period around Whitehorse was short, with late spring and summer killing frosts.

The agroclimatic capability rating, based on effective growing degree days, for the Takhini Forestry Farm demonstration site was Class 6. This is the lowest agroclimatic rating since recording began in 1988. The thirty-year mean for this site is Class 5, which is considered the limit of arable agriculture and only suitable for forages and cold hardy crops. September was another cool month with temperatures mainly below normal. Most stations reported precipitation amounts above normal in September except in the southwest, and most stations reported some snow.

1997 weather summary

Spring and summer temperatures were near normal throughout most of the Yukon. In May, precipitation was below normal in the south while most of central Yukon recorded above normal precipitation. June and July also recorded above normal precipitation in many localities. Warm temperatures and above normal precipitation in the southwest provided for excellent crop

germination and establishment. Carmacks and Dawson areas were hot spots in July. The agroclimatic rating for the McCabe Creek demonstration site 65 kilometres north of Carmacks was Class 2, which is suitable for the production of grain and warm season vegetables.

Temperatures in August were above normal, and precipitation was above normal in the southeast and northwest, and below normal elsewhere. During the 1997 growing season, the Takhini Forestry Farm demonstration site recorded the second highest number of growing degree days since record keeping began in 1988. The agroclimatic rating for the site in 1997 was Class 4, which is suitable for the maturation of oats, barley and rye.

The long frost-free period during this growing season allowed for the maturity of storage cabbage, potatoes, and oat grain in southwest Yukon (Table 2). September was a warm month with temperatures above normal. Precipitation was near to, or below, normal in most areas.

Production sectors

Livestock

Cattle, hogs and horses

Over the past 10 years there has been a steady growth in the numbers of domestic stock in the Yukon (Table 3).

	1986	1991	1996
cattle	132	143	278
hogs	24	70	264
horses	24	221	995

Table 3: *Growth of domestic stock based on the last three Census reports.*

It is anticipated that the establishment of an abattoir in 1998 will result in a substantial increase in the number of cattle and hogs produced in the Yukon over the next 10 years. Current Yukon consumption of pork is about 12,000 head per year, while consumption of beef equates to about 5,000 head per year.

Weiner pig production.

Game-farmed animals (elk, Wood bison, musk ox)

The current trend in game farming is one of slow, steady growth. However, the past 10 years have witnessed numerous fluctuations in this sector. In the mid 1980s to the early 1990s game farming was developing at an excellent rate. However, due to problems with obtaining land for game farming and the departure of several operators from the Yukon, numbers of farmed animals dropped for a few years.

By 1995, the number of animals raised on game farms started to increase once again, and by 1997, there were 77 head of elk on licensed game farms. Elk products have contributed significantly to the growth of this sector in the Yukon. Yukon elk breeding stock and antler velvet are considered among the best in Canada.

Woodland bison are also part of the game farming sector. There is one bison operation in the Yukon producing top quality breeding stock.

The Yukon Game Farm has a small herd of musk oxen.

Reindeer

There is one reindeer operation in the Yukon. This operation continues to expand and produce fine quality animals. Jurisdictions such as British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan are now permitting reindeer to be game farmed, and farms in these provinces have been obtaining stock from the Yukon operation in order to expand.

Llamas

The 1996 Census indicated that there were 18 llamas in the Yukon. This exotic domestic livestock sector started to develop in the mid 1990s and is expected to continue to expand. There is interest in this species for both breeding stock and as pack animals. Llamas are well suited to Yukon conditions and are relatively easy to manage.

Game-farmed elk in the Yukon.

Poultry

Chickens

The past ten-year trend in total chicken production has been one of steady growth. Since 1986, the number of chickens has more than doubled with 6,800 birds reported on farms in 1996. With the upcoming establishment of an abattoir, it is expected that the production of broilers (meat birds) will increase substantially. Yukoners consume over 500,000 birds per year so there is significant opportunity for growth in this sector.

Layers/egg production

This sector has probably seen the most encouraging growth of all poultry and livestock sectors in the past 10 years. The 1996 Census indicated that there were just under 5,000 laying birds in the Yukon. This represents a seven-fold increase since 1986. It is now estimated that 96,000 dozen eggs are produced annually, which meets roughly 15 to 20 percent of the Yukon's consumption requirements. It is anticipated that this sector will continue to expand as real growth opportunities still remain.

Turkeys

Turkey production continues to expand showing a four-fold increase since 1986. Based on the 1996 Census, there were just over 800 birds raised in the Yukon that year. Although the pattern of consumption in the Yukon is seasonal, there are opportunities for substantial expansion in the production of turkeys primarily for meat purposes.

Other

There are limited numbers of ducks, geese and game birds raised in the Yukon, although the growth trend is also positive for these species. There is also one small emu operation active in the Yukon.

Yukon poultry.

Field crops

Grain

The production of cereal grains in the Yukon is limited, primarily due to climatic conditions, and especially the high risk of frost during the growing season. The past 10 years have seen a slow increase in the production of barley and oats as grain crops. There have also been a few acres of wheat produced, primarily in the Dawson region.

The next several years should see an increase in grain production due to the introduction of new, earlier maturing varieties and the accessibility of more appropriate harvesting equipment. Furthermore, as the livestock sector continues to expand, there will be increased demand for locally produced feed grains.

Greenfeed

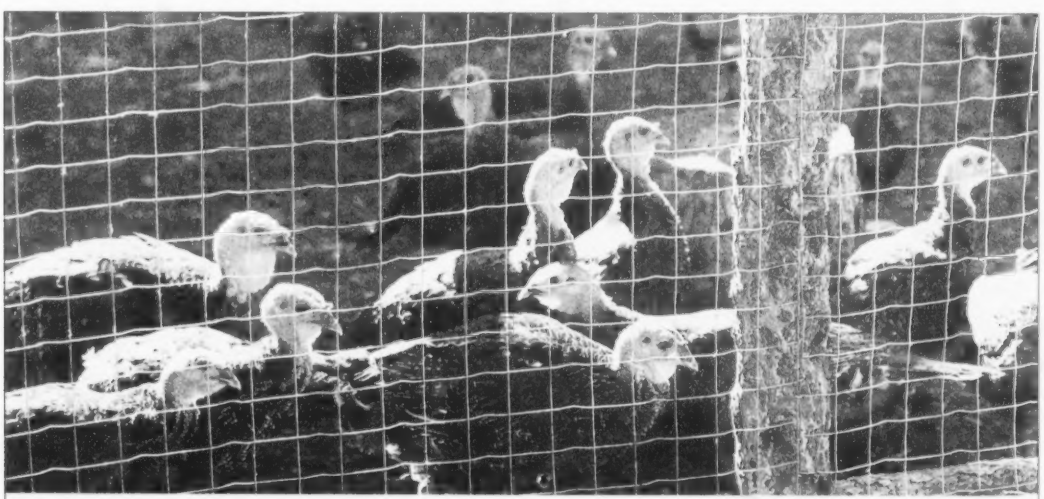
Greenfeed involves the production of oats, and sometimes barley and fall rye, as forage crops. In 1986, the production of greenfeed totalled just over 250 acres. By 1997, there were 1,700 acres of greenfeed produced. Most greenfeed production continues to be oats, which is harvested with a binder (bundles) or a baler (bales) before it matures.

Forage crops

The production of tame forage has always been one of the main production activities in the development of the agriculture sector in the Yukon. Forage production is primarily based on the growing of brome grass, and to a much lesser extent, timothy, and a legume such as alfalfa. Total production of forage has increased from 900 acres in 1986 to over 4,000 acres in 1997. Yukon forage producers grow a good quality product with protein levels between 10 to 12 percent. There continues to be room for expansion of production since the Yukon has not yet reached even 50 percent of its consumption requirements.

Greenhousing

Greenhousing in the Yukon represents the largest sector of horticultural sales. The growth of the industry continues to be strong, with 31 operations recording commercial sales in 1996 (Table 4). Greenhouse vegetable production reported the largest growth since the 1991 census, out-performing the flowering bedding plant industry for the first time in 1996.



Yukon turkeys.

	1986	1991	1996
Number of operations	10	24	31
Square feet under cover	19,380	45,022	83,520

Table 4: *Growth in greenhousing sector (1996 Census).*

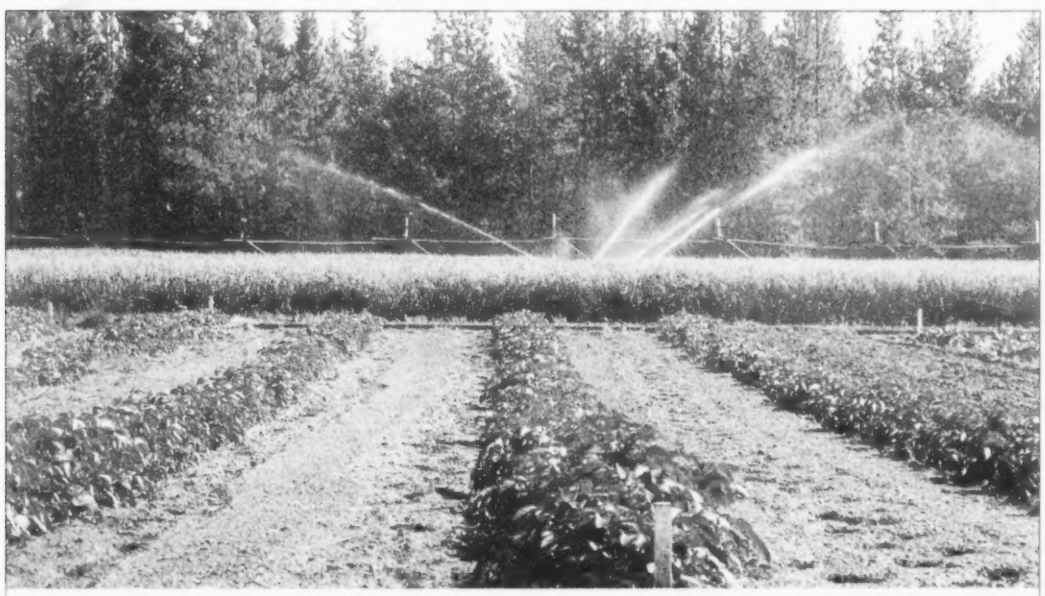
Crops other than flowers and vegetables grown in greenhouses include herbs, and forestry tree seedlings, which accounted for almost 1,800 square feet in production. In 1996, flowers were produced in 18 of the 31 operations, and accounted for 38,363 square feet of greenhouse space. Vegetables were produced in 30 greenhouse operations and accounted for 42,869 square feet of greenhouse space.

Vegetables and berries

Since 1991, production of both field vegetables and berries has declined in the Yukon. A significant reduction in both raspberry and strawberry production was recorded, while there was a slight increase in saskatoon berries. Vegetable production also declined, despite an increase in the number of farms producing vegetables.

Berries	1991	1996
Area in production (acres)	7.3	4.4
Farms reporting	11	9
Vegetables	**1991**	**1996**
Area in production (acres)	37.6	29.9
Farms reporting	21	27

Table 5: *Performance of berry and vegetable sectors (1996 Census).*



Greenfeed oats and potatoes in the Takhini River Valley.

Most produce is marketed fresh through retail stores, farmers' markets and direct sales. Lack of mechanization, cold storage facilities, and a permanent site for the farmers' market in Whitehorse are limiting factors in production and marketing of berries and vegetables.

Native morel mushroom harvest

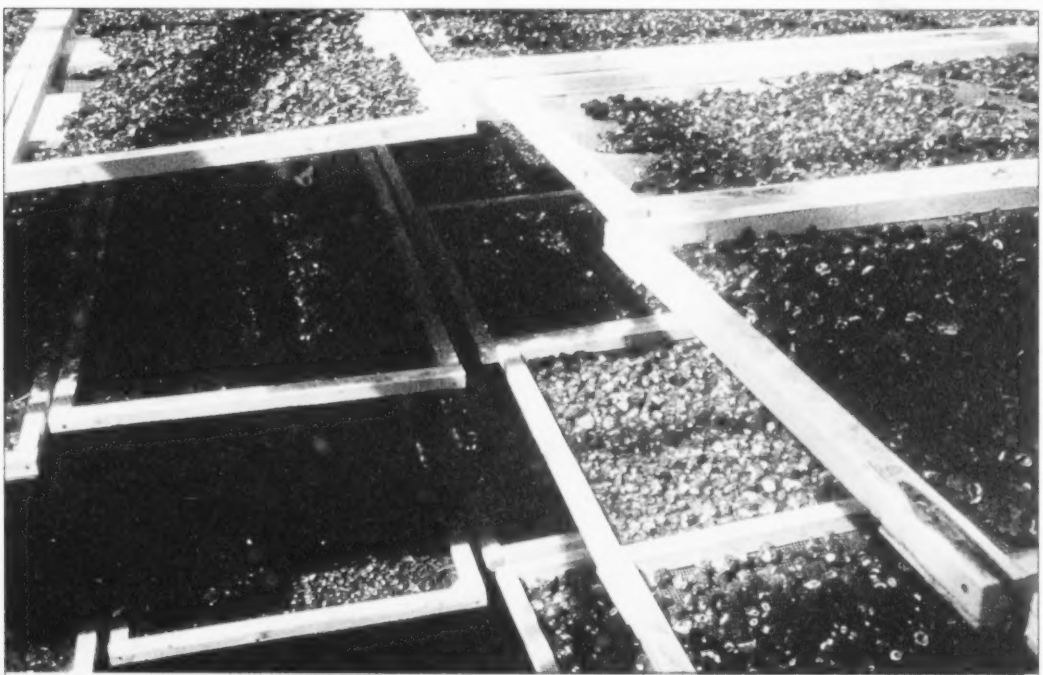
During the summer of 1995, the central Yukon experienced extensive forest fires near Minto, on both sides of the Klondike Highway, producing good growing conditions for morel mushrooms in subsequent years. Prolific fruiting of native morel mushrooms (*Morchella sp.*) is triggered by forest fire activity, especially in the year following the fire.

As anticipated, the easy road access to the site of the 1995 fires brought an increase in mushroom harvesters and buyers to the central Yukon in 1996. The Selkirk First Nation took advantage of this opportunity by organizing and setting up as a major buyer at Minto Landing. It was reported that as many as 400 pickers were in the area at one time and that over 1.5 million dollars worth of mushrooms were harvested that summer.

Smaller fires in 1996 at Dragon Lake and Mt. Nansen brought a smaller number of pickers to those areas in the spring of 1997. Harvest numbers are unknown, but are far below the 1996 levels, due to the more difficult access to the sites and cooler spring temperatures.

Honey production

The number of bee hives in the Yukon remained low in 1996 and 1997. However, some key individuals were out of the Yukon taking training and courses in bee-keeping and honey production. It is anticipated that the number of bee-keepers and production will increase in the coming years.



Morel mushrooms in a dryer.

YUKON GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Department of Renewable Resources

Yukon Agriculture Branch

The Yukon Agriculture Branch was established on April 1, 1986 with a staff of one part-time and two full-time employees. With the growth of the agriculture sector over the past decade, the Branch has grown to six permanent employees, including a Director, Administrative Assistant, Agriculture Development Officer, Agrologist, Land Disposal Coordinator, and a Soils Technician. There is also one auxiliary Grazing Management Coordinator.

The Director is responsible for the overall management and administration of the Branch. Duties include developing policy and regulations, developing and managing the budget and finances, administering extension programs, supervising staff, and meeting with the public — both in the office and on their farms.

The Agriculture Development Officer's responsibilities include inspecting lands under Agreement for Sale, on-farm extension services, coordination of livestock control measures and pounds keepers, and coordination of the Canada Plans Service (CPS) and Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) activities in the Yukon. This person also assists land applicants with the development of farm management plans and attends committee meetings addressing land-related issues.

The Agrologist is responsible for managing the day-to-day extension program, demonstration plots, soils related extension work, and publication of the Branch quarterly newsletter, *InFARMation*, as well as research reports. The Agrologist also sits on a variety of committees, and occasionally acts as Director of the Branch.

The Land Disposal Coordinator receives, processes, and tracks agricultural land applications, and maintains a database of these applications.

The Soils Technician provides technical support to the Branch and is responsible for identifying and evaluating agricultural capability. This person is also involved in grazing land assessments, the research and demonstration plots, database compilation and analysis, as well as numerous extension activities.

The Grazing Management Coordinator is responsible for identifying and evaluating plant species and natural vegetation communities on grazing agreement lands. This person is also responsible for range improvement programs, grazing management agreement development and administration, and related extension work. The Grazing Management Coordinator has been called upon to assist with insect and plant identification questions as well.

The Agriculture Branch had an Operation and Maintenance (O&M) budget allocation of $610,000 in 1995-96 (a three percent decrease over 1994-95) and $604,000 in 1996-97 (a one percent decrease over 1995-96).

Approximately half of the Branch's staff time was devoted to various forms of extension services and administration. Another 10 percent was dedicated to inspections and regulatory activities. An increasing proportion of time is being allocated to agricultural land and land

application issues. Staff also spent significant amounts of time on policy development, infrastructure and event planning, marketing projects, and attending Agricultural Association and Agricultural Planning and Advisory Committee meetings.

Demonstration plots

The Agriculture Branch has maintained demonstration plots on the Takhini Forestry Farm since 1988. The initial thrust was to test a wide variety of crops for suitability in the Yukon. This phase complemented the Yukon Crop Development Program that ran from 1987 to 1990.

The second phase of this project saw a reduced emphasis on variety testing and more work on soil conservation techniques. Different varieties of legumes were tested for productivity and nitrogen fixing capability. A variety of green manures were tested, including field peas, lentils and oats. The results of these trials were documented in the Agriculture Branch research reports in 1990, 1991, and 1993.

In 1995, a four-year trial to increase soil organic matter and improve soil tilth was initiated at the Takhini demonstration site. A horticultural crop followed a three-field rotation of plow down crops. Records regarding soil pH, organic matter, economic inputs and returns were kept to advise farmers on the costs associated with the program. Results were published in the annual publication, *Yukon Agricultural Research and Demonstration Report* (see Appendix).

The 1996 growing season at the Takhini demonstration site recorded only 595 growing degree days, an agroclimatic rating of Class 6, which by definition, "imposes such severe limitations for cultivated agriculture that cropping is not feasible." Despite this definition, the 1996 demonstration plot showed that if irrigation can be applied to germinate spring seeded crops, especially during critical periods of moisture stress, the production of forage crops and frost tolerant vegetables can be both feasible and profitable. The only crop to show an economic loss was potatoes, which were too frost sensitive to produce a crop in only 25 frost-free days (Table 2).

The 1997 growing season was the opposite of 1996. The Takhini demonstration site recorded above average temperatures and a longer frost-free period allowing for the first successful potato crop in three years. Average forage yields also increased in 1997. Soil pH (alkalinity) was noted to be decreasing and soil organic matter increasing, which was the aim of the demonstration.

In 1995, a four-year grain trial was initiated at McCabe Creek Farm, 65 kilometres north of Carmacks. The purpose of the trial was to demonstrate the effect of irrigation on grain production in the central Yukon. Three plots of barley, wheat and oats were seeded each spring under dryland conditions. Three plots of the same crops were then replicated under irrigated conditions for comparison.

The 1996 growing season produced similar results to 1995 in that no crop worth harvesting could be produced without irrigation. The plots under irrigated conditions produced mature crops in both 1995 and 1996.

In 1997, recorded rainfall was above average in both May and June, producing the first mature crops under non-irrigated conditions. With below average rainfall in both July and August, the irrigated crops surged ahead of the non-irrigated crops and produced grains of higher quality and quantity.

Extension services

General

The Agriculture Branch provides a variety of on-farm and in-office consultation services to producers throughout the Yukon. These services provide linkage between new research and on-farm applications of information and technology. In 1996 and 1997, specialists were imported from Alberta, British Columbia and Alaska to share their expertise in gardening and livestock health with Yukon producers.

The Branch also maintains a collection of agricultural resource materials for reference. The collection includes books, pamphlets, and videos on a wide range of agricultural subjects, as well as a herbarium and a display of Yukon garden insects.

InFARMation, a quarterly bulletin, has been produced by the Branch since 1987 to keep producers updated on industry activities and events. It contains articles on crops, sustainable agriculture, extension services, livestock, industry trends, and research and demonstration projects. Circulation has increased from about 300 copies per issue to approximately 450 copies per issue.

The Canada Plans Service, available at the Agriculture Branch office, has over 100 plans available for the construction of agricultural facilities. Plans are available for most farm buildings, root cellars, livestock shelters, animal chutes and grain storage structures. Up to 30 of these plans are used by Yukon producers each year.

The feed, soil and forage testing service is one of the most popular programs offered by the Branch. Individuals can bring in samples for shipment to laboratories for analysis. In this way, producers can determine if their soils, feeds or forages are deficient in any important nutrients, and take corrective action.

1996-97 seminars and symposia

The agricultural symposia sponsored by the Branch are also extremely popular. They provide local producers with an opportunity to share their experiences and to hear from experts on a variety of topics. In 1996 and 1997, symposia were held in Dawson City and Whitehorse.

On February 8, 1996, a day-long horticulture seminar featuring local gardeners Roy Ness and Herb Wahl, and University of Alaska professor Dr. Patricia Holloway, was held in Whitehorse. This seminar attracted a record 134 participants. Rod Chernos, a poultry specialist from Alberta Agriculture, held a concurrent seminar on egg and broiler production. This seminar was also presented in Dawson City on February 10.

The ninth annual North of 60 Agriculture Conference was held in Whitehorse in the fall of 1996. This conference featured a seminar on "Horses, Nutrition and the Law," and attracted an audience of over 60 people.

In February of 1997, Wayne Vandre, a horticulturist from Alaska, made presentations in both Whitehorse and Dawson City. Ken Kreig, an Alaskan livestock specialist, also made presentations at these two conferences.

On November 15, 1997, the Branch sponsored the tenth annual North of 60 Conference in Whitehorse. The format was a more "open house" style with specialists present in the areas of

honey production, forage production, farm taxes, soils, farm safety, agricultural land, and crop production. The Yukon Agriculture Association and Yukon 4-H were also present at this conference.

Master gardener course

The first Yukon master gardener course was held at the Whitehorse campus of Yukon College from October 20 to 24, 1997. Wayne Vandre, a horticulture specialist with the Alaska Cooperative Extension Service, provided instruction to a full class of 25 students. Mr. Vandre has been teaching this course in Alaska since 1978, and was instrumental in having the program launched in the Yukon.

The master gardener course is offered to experienced northern gardeners who have agreed to provide 40 hours of volunteer time to assist other gardeners in the community. The Agriculture Branch plans to continue offering this course annually.

Public contacts

Table 6 summarizes the Branch's public contacts from 1994 to 1997.

Activity	Number of contacts			
	1994	1995	1996	1997
Telephone calls	2,232	2,475	2,643	2,461
Office visits	856	907	1,263	1,227
Farm visits	286	264	261	215

Table 6: *Summary of contacts by the Yukon Agriculture Branch with the public, 1994-1997.*

Policy initiatives

Agriculture policy evaluation

The Department of Renewable Resources received approval on November 23, 1995 to proceed with a two-phase evaluation of the Agriculture Policy. The first phase involved an internal assessment of the Agriculture Branch programs, as outlined in Part I of the policy. A member of the Finance and Administration Branch of the Department facilitated the internal assessment during the summer and fall of 1996, and completed a report in February, 1997.

This report reviewed the policy objectives, defined program evaluation indicators, and reviewed departmental implementation measures and the resources devoted to implementation. It will provide useful information for the comprehensive Phase II evaluation, which will be carried out in 1998, and will be primarily focused on the Agricultural Land Program.

Animal health legislation

Following up on the discussion paper and consultations in 1994 and 1995, the Agriculture Branch prepared draft animal health legislation for consultation in the summer of 1996. Comments were incorporated, and the bill was introduced and approved in the fall 1997 sitting of the Yukon Legislative Assembly. The act provides for measures to be taken to prevent the importation and spread of animal diseases in the Yukon.

Animal Protection Act amendments

Following a series of unfortunate incidents in 1996 and 1997, of animal abuse involving dogs, the Department of Renewable Resources expedited amendments to the *Animal Protection Act* to increase penalties and improve enforcement. These amendments were approved by the Yukon Legislative Assembly in December, 1997.

Department of Community and Transportation Services

Interim Reciprocal Agreement on Farm Vehicles

In November, 1996, the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) agreed to extend the Interim Reciprocal Agreement on Farm Vehicles. This agreement, originally reached in 1995, allows any Yukon farmer who is hauling commercial farm products and displaying a FARM vehicle registered plate on a vehicle to travel throughout B.C. by:

1. purchasing a single trip or quarterly non-resident commercial permit;

2. filing a certificate of financial responsibility with ICBC prior to travelling to B.C.; and

3. purchasing a B.C. fuel tax permit.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Abattoir project

The construction of an abattoir in the Yukon has been a goal of the Yukon Agriculture Association and the Agriculture Branch since 1988, when the first feasibility study was conducted.

From 1988 to 1994, the Branch and association cooperated in the development of plans, equipment lists, additional studies and the search for a suitable site. A steering committee was established to plan activities and identify funding sources. In 1994, the association received a commitment of $500,000 from the Economic Development Agreement towards capital construction costs. However, the association was unable to raise sufficient resources to meet the terms of the contribution agreement.

In 1995 and 1996, the focus of the project shifted as smaller, and more cost-effective options were examined. A call for expressions of interest resulted in three proposals being received in 1996. The Yukon government then issued a call for proposals in 1997, and two proposals from the private sector were received. In November 1997, Partridge Creek Farm near Stewart Crossing received approval to construct an abattoir with government assistance of just over $113,000.

The proposed abattoir building will be 2,280 square feet and will be designed to handle a variety of species including hogs, cattle, sheep, game-farmed animals, and poultry. Slaughter fees are planned to be 44 cents per pound for poultry, $70 per head for cattle, and $50 per head for hogs. The abattoir is expected to commence operations in October, 1998, and it is anticipated that, by the fifth year of operation, it will be processing over 14,000 birds, 130 head of cattle and 300 head of hogs per year.

Egg grading station

The Yukon's only egg grading station continued to operate at Partridge Creek Farm during 1996 and 1997. This is a privately operated facility which ensures that eggs produced on the farm meet federally established standards. Federal inspection of the operation is conducted on an ongoing basis, and the farm grades an estimated 30,000 dozen eggs annually.

Veterinarian services

The Yukon continued to be served by two veterinarian clinics during 1996 and 1997. These vet services are both located in Whitehorse but one clinic serves the entire Yukon. Both clinics have veterinarians who provide large animal services. The Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada veterinarian in Dawson Creek, B.C. also makes visits to the Yukon to test game-farmed and domestic animals for brucellosis and tuberculosis.

Farm capital

On-farm investment is increasing at a rapid rate in the Yukon. The value of farm infrastructure, land and machinery makes a significant contribution to the Yukon economy. Based on the value of total farm capital and farm operating expenses it is clear that the industry is a major player in the purchase of local goods and services.

	1986	1991	1996
Value of land, buildings and equipment	5.7	23.2	44.8
Value of land and buildings	4.2	19.5	33.6

Table 7: *Growth in value of Yukon agricultural infrastructure ($millions) (1996 Census).*

JOINT FEDERAL-YUKON PROGRAMS

Economic Development Agreement

The Canada-Yukon Economic Development Agreement (EDA) provided financial assistance for economic development projects in a variety of sectors of the Yukon economy. The Renewable Resources Cooperation Agreement funded projects in the following areas:

- Element 1: Research and planning
- Element 2: Pilot and demonstration initiatives, and
- Element 3: Business development.

The EDA evaluation, completed in May, 1996, reported that:

> Relative to its importance in the economy, the agriculture industry has been the largest beneficiary of expenditures under the last two EDAs (1985-1995). Between 1991 and 1993, for which capital expenditure data are available in the Yukon agriculture industry, EDA expenditures amounted to over $640,000 or approximately 17 percent of capital expenditures in the industry as a whole. Although no industry-level capital expenditure data are available prior to 1991, the EDA contributed an average of $290,000 per year between 1985 and 1990.
>
> The ten-year average (1984-1993) of agriculture's contribution to the Yukon's real GDP is 0.1%. Between 1986 and 1991, however, there was a substantial increase in the number of farms (tripling). While the difference between total gross farm receipts and farm operating expenses was negative in 1986, there was a positive difference in 1991.
>
> This would suggest that on average, farms are more viable than they were in 1986. Given the scale of Renewable Resource dollars expended on the Yukon agriculture industry, it is plausible to conclude that the EDA contributed to the changes in this industry. (*Final Evaluation Report*, May, 1996, p. 245.)

The EDA was not renewed after it expired on April 1, 1996.

Green Plan

The Canada/Yukon agri-food component of the Green Plan was completed March 31, 1997. Since 1993, projects related to water quality, soil and land conservation, wildlife habitat, pollution and waste management, research and demonstration, and education and awareness were eligible for funding on a cost shared basis between the federal and Yukon governments.

A final program evaluation was conducted at the end of the agreement which made a series of recommendations and conclusions about the program. The evaluator noted that: "Overall, the program was well received, achieved its stated aims and contributed to future development of the agri-food industry in the Yukon." (*Canada/Yukon Agri-food Green Plan Evaluation Report*, Inukshuk Planning and Development, March, 1997.)

Table 8 lists expenditures in each of the program categories over the life of the program.

Year	Water quality	Soil conservation	Wildlife habitat	Pollution/ waste management	Research demonstrations	Education awareness	Total
1993-94	9,901	8,500	302	7,000	2,720	13,680	42,103
1994-95	0	19,477	0	13,045	3,300	15,747	51,569
1995-96	0	16,700	15,800	0	1,660	21,131	55,291
1996-97	0	4,200	18,710	5,327	0	1,250	29,487
Total	9,901	48,877	34,813	25,372	7,680	51,809	178,450

Table 8: *Summary of program expenditures (in dollars) of the Canada/Yukon Agri-Food Green Plan.*

Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund

The Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) Fund is a federal program designed to assist rural and agricultural people and communities adjust to the changing economy.

In 1997, the Yukon Agriculture Association (YAA) applied for, and received, assistance to establish a Yukon CARD Fund. The YAA received $250,000 for two years of program funding, to be distributed to worthy projects around the Yukon.

A committee of five non-government representatives and two *ex-officio* government representatives, was established to review applications in four program areas: rural human resource development, infrastructure development, marketing and consultation, communication and public awareness.

Agriculture Planning and Advisory Committee

The Agriculture Planning and Advisory Committee (APAC) was established in 1984 to provide a mechanism for ongoing consultation between government and the agriculture industry in the Yukon. The committee has a mandate to make recommendations to the Minister of Renewable Resources on any agricultural issue. It is chaired by the president of the Yukon Agricultural Association or their designate, and co-chaired by a senior Yukon government representative.

APAC continued to be active in 1996 and 1997. The committee met in Whitehorse, Dawson City and Mayo to discuss such issues as the Agriculture Policy Evaluation, planning for the CARD Fund, agriculture-related legislation, and the proposed abattoir facility.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Research Branch

The Yukon Land Resources Unit (YLRU) has one full-time employee and conducts major projects in partnership with other government agencies and industry. Since 1983, the unit has acted as the point of contact for all Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada programs in the Yukon, although the office is run under the direction of the Research Branch. The office operates as part of the Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre in Summerland, B.C., which has a mandate for agricultural research throughout B.C. and the Yukon.

A major activity for 1996 and 1997 was the completion of the Whitehorse soil and terrain mapping project conducted for the City of Whitehorse. The mapping was conducted under contract with Mougeot Geo-Analyses, and detailed maps were provided to assist the city in identifying areas for residential development, environmental planning and protection, wetland management, and potential gravel resources. This project completed the soil survey of the Whitehorse area, including the Takhini Valley, Carcross Valley, and City of Whitehorse, and culminates over 10 years of survey and field inspections.

Also completed in 1997 was the Canada-Yukon Agreement on the Agri-Food component of the Green Plan. A total of $90,000 was spent in 1996 and 1997 on a variety of projects related to environmental sustainability. The office now sits as an advisor to the Yukon Agriculture Association on the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund, which provides money to industry to undertake various projects related to agricultural development in the Yukon.

Working with the Forest Management group within the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, a new ecosystem classification guide for southeast Yukon was published as part of a new initiative in ecosystem management. The unit also led the creation of a new Yukon ecoregions map and descriptive report that is being used as a guide in the establishment of a Yukon Protected Areas Strategy by the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Branch of the Department of Renewable Resources.

Together with the Agriculture Branch, the unit provides soil expertise, soil testing and interpretation services for Yukon producers.

Market and Industry Services Branch

The Market and Industry Services Branch (MISB) provides services to the Yukon agri-food industry through the Alberta/Territories Regional Office. MISB works closely with the industry and the Yukon Agriculture Branch to enhance the Yukon agri-food sector's share of the domestic and international markets. The Branch continues to be an *ex-officio* member of the Yukon Agricultural Planning Advisory Committee.

As the Yukon Agriculture Branch and the industry paused to celebrate the Branch's tenth anniversary, it gave time to reflect on the significant growth in the agri-food sector. During this period there has been a considerable shift in the working relationship and mandates of the industry, and federal and Yukon governments. This shift is most evident in program delivery.

There has been an evolution in program delivery from Branch programs being delivered to the industry with Yukon government input and advice, to shared program delivery between the federal and Yukon governments, as seen under the Green Plan, to the new approach of industry-delivered programs with federal and Yukon input.

The announcement in August, 1997, that the Yukon Agricultural Association would receive funding under the Canada Adaptation and Rural Development Initiative, completed the evolution. The announcement itself was significant as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada attended the Klondyke Harvest Fair to make the presentation to the Yukon Agriculture Association.

MISB continues to focus on international business development services for the Canadian agri-food exporter through the delivery of the Agri-Food Trade Service (ATS). The ATS, a partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade under Team Canada Inc., provides market information and intelligence, export counselling, and export programs.

Team Canada Inc. was announced in October 1997 as a cooperative federal, provincial and private sector network providing the business community with a single point of access to a wide range of international business development programs, information and services.

Within this, ATS links regional offices with national experts and Agri-Food Trade Commissioners in Canadian embassies. Through the ATS, Yukon companies have been listed in the WinExport database that is accessed by 1,200 Canadian trade staff in Canada and abroad. These same Yukon companies are receiving notification of available trade documents, international trade statistics, regulatory information, trade leads, and market studies through the Fax Back systems implemented by MISB. Access to the ATS can be obtained through the Team Canada Inc. toll-free telephone number (1-888-811-1119).

Policy Branch

The Policy Branch of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada provides a variety of programs to assist agricultural producers adapt to the changing regulatory and economic conditions facing the industry across the country. The Policy Branch provided major financial support to the Yukon Agriculture Association during 1996 and 1997.

During the fall of 1996, final payments were made to the recipients of the Feed Freight Assistance Programs, with payouts totalling over $130,000 directly to producers in the Yukon. In August, 1997, the Minister announced funding of $250,000 to the Yukon Agriculture Association through the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund. In association with CARD, the Farm Business Management Council approved over $60,000 of funding to YAA for the development of a web site and other forms of communication utilizing Internet technology. The Farm Business Management Council also provides instructional materials to producers on a variety of business management topics.

Policy Branch services to the Yukon are coordinated from the Winnipeg office of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in conjunction with Branch headquarters in Ottawa, and are delivered with the assistance of the Yukon Land Resources Unit in Whitehorse.

Farm Credit Corporation

The Farm Credit Corporation (FCC) provides financial services to assist in the development of farms and small- to medium-sized farm-related businesses. The FCC has a variety of mortgage and non-mortgage loan products available to finance the purchase of assets to be used in developing a farm or farm-related business. These products include variable rate loans and fixed interest rate terms from one to 20 years. Loan applications can be completed through mail or by fax and telephone.

The Corporation's loan portfolio in the Yukon currently includes 18 accounts, worth over $500,000, with an average loan size of just over $31,000.

INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

Yukon Agricultural Association

The Yukon Agricultural Association (YAA) promotes the development of the agriculture industry and works closely with government to achieve its goals. The association is comprised of three chapters: Whitehorse, Stewart Valley and Dawson City. An association office is maintained in Whitehorse. The association's membership grew substantially in the past two years as a result of an intensive campaign by YAA to improve public awareness of the association and its activities.

YAA efforts in 1996 and 1997 were devoted to the following initiatives:

- public education and awareness about the association and the agriculture industry;
- fundraising through bingos, raffles and membership sales, as well as obtaining funds from the Yukon government for the farmers' market and from the federal government under the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund;
- fall fair program;
- farmers' market program;
- agriculture policy evaluation; and
- numerous meetings and reviews respecting issues and concerns surrounding the agriculture industry.

The Yukon Agriculture Association can be contacted at:
Box 4703 Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 3V7
Phone (867) 668-6864
Fax (867) 393-3566
e-mail: yukonag@internorth.com

Game Growers Association

The Game Growers Association of Yukon was established in 1989 to represent and promote the Yukon's game farming industry. The association has grown from five members in 1994-95 to seven in 1997.

The number of elk being farmed in the Yukon has shown a slow but steady increase. In 1995, there were approximately 70 elk in captivity; this has increased to 77 elk in 1997.

The Game Growers Association has become increasingly active in national and western associations and committees. President Dan Nowlan participates on the Canadian Venison Council, a national organization promoting and developing policies on game farming in Canada. The Yukon Association also liaises with the Alberta Venison Council.

The Yukon/Alberta Elk Import Protocol remained in effect in 1996 and 1997. This Protocol ensures that Yukon elk are healthy and disease free before being exported to Alberta. The Yukon's elk continue to bring top dollar at Moore's Auctioneering in Alberta. Yukon elk are considered highly desirable, and two Yukon game farms now promote and sell semen straws from their top herd sires. The Yukon also exported to the United States in 1997.

Yukon 4-H Program

The 4-H program is an international youth program dedicated to social and technical skill development of young people. "4-H" stands for the pledging of heart, health, head, and hands to community service and responsibility.

The Yukon 4-H program has clubs in Whitehorse, Watson Lake and Dawson City. The program added a llama club to the already existing horse and dog clubs in 1997. Six members enrolled in this new club, which started meeting in March, 1997. By the end of 1997, the Yukon program had over 60 members and 10 leaders involved in five different clubs.

The Yukon program emphasized strengthened relations with British Columbia during 1996 and 1997. In November, 1996, Susan Hazouskie was brought in from Grassmere, B.C. to run a leadership workshop. In October, 1997, Carlene Kerr of Dawson City attended the B.C. provincial volunteers workshop in Naramata, B.C.

1997 Klondyke Harvest Fair in Whitehorse.

MARKETING AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

Whitehorse Farmers' Market

The Whitehorse Farmers' Market continued to operate seasonally from May to September in 1996 and 1997, from a location beside the Feed Store on Second Avenue. Special farmers' market days were also held each year in late August at the Klondyke Harvest Fair. The location of a permanent site for the market continued to be an issue for organizers during these years, as well, and remained unresolved at the close of 1997.

Klondyke Harvest Fair

The Klondyke Harvest Fair is the major annual public awareness initiative of the Whitehorse Chapter of the Yukon Agricultural Association. The fair is held over a weekend in August, and the different events use all of Rotary Peace Park in downtown Whitehorse. The bench show is a major attraction for both exhibitors of crafts and agricultural products and the thousands of people attending the fair each year. In addition to the bench show, there is a farmers' market, midway, livestock displays, entertainment and food concessions.

Other smaller fairs also took place in 1996 and 1997. Faro, Watson Lake, Carmacks, the Hamlet of Mount Lorne, and Mayo all hosted fairs in their communities.

Media coverage

The Yukon's media coverage of agricultural events and activities reflected the prominent issues in 1996 and 1997. However, media coverage was down from previous years. The *Whitehorse Star* published 14 letters and articles on agricultural issues during these two years, with nine items in 1996 and five in 1997. The *Yukon News* published four articles or letters in 1996 and one in 1997. Articles covered such topics as the Klondyke Harvest Fair, the construction of an abattoir, wild mushroom picking and the 1996 census.

School presentations

In both 1996 and 1997, Agriculture Branch staff were involved in a number of presentations in Whitehorse schools. The Director assisted elementary students in two elementary schools in setting up incubators for hatching chicks. A presentation on insects was made by the Grazing Coordinator, and the Agrologist attended career day at the high school. Branch personnel were also involved in judging local science fairs, 4-H club demonstrations, fall fairs, and working with the Innovators in the Schools program.

APPENDIX

Yukon Agricultural Extension Publications: 1996-1997

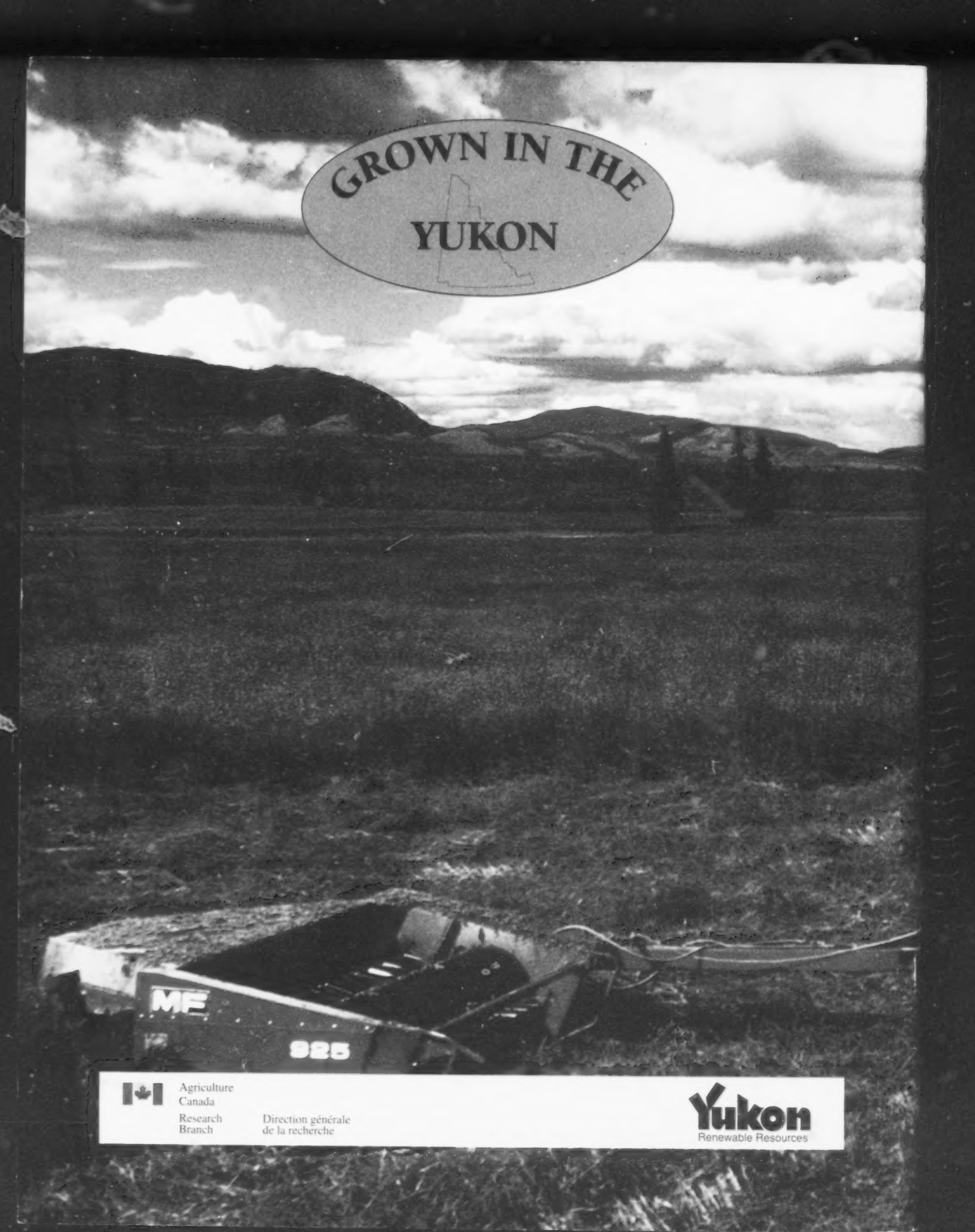
Agriculture Branch, Yukon Department of Renewable Resources. *InFARMation*, (Quarterly Bulletin). Compiled and edited by T. Hill and B. Sproule.

Hill, T., and Sproule, B., 1996. *Yukon Agricultural Research and Demonstration Report, 1996 Field Season*. Yukon Department of Renewable Resources.

Hill, T., and Sproule, B., 1997. *Yukon Agricultural Research and Demonstration Report, 1997 Field Season*. Yukon Department of Renewable Resources.

Kenney, M. Wm., 1996. *An Overview of the Yukon Morel Mushroom Industry*. Report prepared for the Yukon Department of Renewable Resources and Yukon Department of Economic Development.

Smyth, S., Beckman, D.B., and Smith, C.A.S., 1996. *Yukon Agriculture: State of the Industry, 1994-1995*. Yukon Department of Renewable Resources and Yukon Soil Survey Unit, Agriculture Canada.



Agriculture Canada
Research Branch
Direction générale de la recherche

Yukon
Renewable Resources